

SUMMARY: In this letter written from London to Sir Dudley Carleton on 3 January 1623 [=1624], John Chamberlain mentions the release from prison of Oxford's son and heir, Henry de Vere, 18<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford, from the Tower, his marriage to Lady Diana Cecil, and his reinstatement at court at the suit of the Duke of Buckingham. The transcript below is taken from McClure, Norman Egbert, *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, Vol. II, (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1939) pp. 536-8.

My very good Lord, the King came to town on Christmas eve, and tarries with much ado till Thursday next. Most of the time hath been spent in daily consultations, which resolved in the end on a parliament to begin the 10<sup>th</sup> of February, and Sir Randall Crew is in speech to be speaker. The writs are ready to be sent forth, but I heard yesterday there is a stay made till further order. Before the parliament was fully agreed, Sir Edward Coke was sent for to the council-table, and told the King had special use of his service in a commission into Ireland, so that he was willed to prepare himself to be gone within forty days. Being surprised with this sudden alarm, and pausing awhile, the council required his answer, which he gave in few words that he came not thither to answer, but to obey, and within two days after went into Norfolk to settle his affairs. Sir Edwin Sandys, Sir William Jones and one auditor, Phelips, are joined with him in the same commission. It was since said that the Prince had laboured for his stay, and to save him from so hard a journey in respect of his years being threescore and fourteen, and of some other construction that may be made of this employment, but for aught I hear, he must go.

The great expectation we had of alterations of places and offices seems to be quite vanished, or at least suspended till after the parliament. Dr. Whiting, that was silenced for a sermon at court, is restored to his preaching, and with good words. We talk of a proclamation likewise shortly to come forth against priests and Jesuits. I pray God it be not too late, though better late than never, which makes the papists hang down their heads and look for no good for their turn by this parliament, and yet they say the match is not quite off, for Gresley went away two days since with a new proxy, but either they knew not, or conceal their knowledge, that it is not to be performed or executed till she be on shipboard, which God knows when it will be, whether ever or never, for the Spaniards are said to take the late delay as a great affront, and say they will hardly come in danger of such another. The ambassadors show much passion, both of grief and anger, insomuch that Inojosa complains greatly of both the favourites, who for their own humours and interests have marred so fair an alliance, and was heard to wish that they had either of them a stake in their breech, and in a bravado this other day wished the Earl of Rutland to commend him to his son-in-law, and tell him they two were likely to grow great friends for that they run both one course, which was to hinder the match. But the best sign of breach is that I hear Gresley carried order to recall his lord and master, as well for other reasons as for that it seems Sir Walter Aston and he run contrary ways, and send several intelligence without acquainting one another with their doings. The Lord of Kensington is yet deferred for going into France, yet the Duke of Buckingham, the Lord of Carlisle and

he have had long conference divers times with the French ambassador of late, which some construe to be rather to amuse the Spaniard than for any serious or substantial treaty.

On Tuesday last the Earl of Oxford, after twenty months imprisonment, was released out of the Tower. The Lord of Kensington carried the warrant, and convoyed him thence after six o'clock at night to the Earl of Exeter's, where he lodged, and on New Year's day married his daughter, the Lady Diana Cecil, with a portion of £30,000 *viis et modis*. That day after dinner he went to the court, and was conducted to his Majesty's presence by the Duke of Buckingham, where he found gracious acceptance, with good words and good counsel, the honour of which business the Duke of Buckingham takes to himself in good reason, for having undertaken it, he found it more difficult than he expected, which bred a whispering that his favour and fortune declined, it being observed that he had prevailed in little or nothing since his coming out of Spain.

I wrote that Sir William Beecher was provost of Eton, and though I had it from a good hand (that I presumed I might build upon), yet it seems the grant passed no further than the signet or privy seal, and he is yet where he was;

At this instant Dieston brings me your letter of the 21<sup>st</sup> of the last month, and yet I can add nothing more than that two nights agoe a small vessel that came from Dunkirk and lay at Radcliffe was surprised by sixteen conscionable sailors or thieves who took away only a case of taffetas, a bale of black Naples silk, and a pack of linen cloth, of a great quantity of suchlike goods that were in her, and when some would have had more, the major part cried it was enough, and so went their way, and are not yet heard of.

Here is much practising against the masque on Twelfth Night, and many meetings at noblemen's houses in the afternoons, as yesterday the Prince, with the rest of his retinue, were at the Lord of Bridgewater's where they had a great banquet, and afterwards went home to supper as the usual manner is. So wishing a good year and many to you and my lady, I commend you both to the protection of the Almighty. From London this third of January, 1623 [=1624].

Your Lordship's most assuredly at command,

John Chamberlain

The writs for the parliament are sent away this day, and I hear the Lord Coke's journey is yet in question.

To the right honourable Sir Dudley Carleton, knight, Lord Ambassador for his Majesty with the States of the United Provinces at the Hague.